United Nations A/C.1/59/PV.4

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

First Committee
4th meeting
Thursday, 7 October 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. De Alba ..... (Mexico)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Agenda items 57 to 72 (*continued*)**

**General debate on all disarmament and international security items**

**Ms. Bethel** (Bahamas): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following 13 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, the Bahamas. CARICOM delegations would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to guide the work of this most challenging and important Committee. We are confident that you will guide our work to a successful conclusion. We pledge our full support and cooperation in that regard.

CARICOM delegations would like to thank Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory remarks highlighting some of the more pressing disarmament and international security issues facing the First Committee at this session. CARICOM delegations also wish once again to pay tribute to the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, for their sterling work throughout the year.

It is a source of concern to CARICOM delegations that once again we must acknowledge that the current climate prevailing in the international disarmament and arms control arena does not inspire much confidence that we, as States Members of the United Nations, are living up to our obligation, contained in the Charter, to preserve international peace and security. Little progress has been made in recent times in restoring confidence in critical multilateral treaties; agreement on enhanced verification measures remains elusive; stalemate still prevails in the Conference on Disarmament; and global military expenditures continue to rise.

It is against that backdrop that this Committee, and the General Assembly as a whole, has engaged in an exercise of critical self-examination and reflection in an effort to identify ways and means to make this body more effective. CARICOM delegations pay tribute to the process initiated by your predecessor, and continued by you, Mr. Chairman, to revitalize and rationalize the work of the Committee, in concert with the ongoing process of the revitalization of the General Assembly as a whole. The adoption of resolution 56/316 earlier this year has provided both the impetus and the context for our deliberations on both procedural and substantive means to improve our methods of work.

CARICOM States welcome the transparency and frank dialogue that have characterised our reform discussions thus far and look forward to continuing discussions on practical and realistic ways in which to make the work of the Committee, and thus of the General Assembly as a whole, have a greater impact on

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the global disarmament agenda and the current threats facing the international community. We must ensure, however, that we do not engage in reform as an end in itself, but rather as a means to make real progress on those issues on our agenda that remain unresolved. It is our hope that we can marry the reform impulse with the necessary political will to ensure that we all meet our Charter obligations.

The issue of weapons of mass destruction continues to be at the forefront of our collective concerns. CARICOM States remain concerned that some of the critical legal instruments governing the multilateral disarmament agenda have recently come under threat or have stalled in implementation. In that context, we reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and continue to call for its universality. We also call on all States parties to the NPT to fully implement their obligations under article VI of the Treaty, as well as the commitments made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. CARICOM States look forward to next year's NPT Review Conference as an opportunity to assess the progress made in implementing the commitments undertaken at the 2000 Review Conference and to chart the way forward to further achieve the purposes and goals of the Treaty.

In that context, CARICOM States also call for a renewed commitment to promoting the entry into force and the implementation of both the letter and the spirit of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including through prompt treaty action by those States whose adherence is needed for its entry into force. We applaud the work of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in promoting the entry into force of the Treaty.

We are strongly committed to the process of regional cooperation in promoting nuclear non-proliferation and the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. It is a source of immense satisfaction to CARICOM States that the Treaty of Tlatelolco commands universal adherence in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region. We encourage other States engaged in discussions to create nuclear-weapon-free zones to continue to move those processes forward in pursuit of the important goal of non-proliferation.

We, as members of the international community, have committed ourselves to the control and elimination of certain types of weapons, having recognized the indiscriminate and devastating effects that those weapons have on military and civilian populations alike. In that context, CARICOM States are committed to the implementation of the conventions governing the development, production and use of chemical and biological weapons. Accordingly, we welcome the initiative of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to organize a regional workshop on the universality and implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is to be held in Saint Kitts and Nevis in November of this year. CARICOM States are also committed to a process of developing and enhancing verification arrangements governing the development, production and use of biological weapons, as a means to promote greater levels of confidence among States.

CARICOM member States are fully aware of the devastating effects of landmines, especially on the more vulnerable members of our societies, including women and children. We therefore look forward to the first Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which is to be held in Nairobi in November this year. At the Nairobi summit on a mine-free world, world leaders will assess the progress made in ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines since the entry into force of the Convention. We expect that, with the adoption of the Conference's draft declaration and plan of action, States parties will recommit themselves to overcome the remaining challenges. CARICOM remains committed to the universality of the Ottawa Convention, and expresses its appreciation for the support and assistance received from the international community in mine clearance and stockpile destruction in the few areas of some of our territories that are mined.

While the spectre of weapons of mass destruction hangs over us all, the international community has rightly recognized, and has decided to act upon, the growing threat posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. CARICOM States are strongly committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. CARICOM States do not produce

small arms or light weapons, nor are we large-scale importers of that category of weapons. Yet, despite our best efforts, we continue to face the uncontrolled spread of illicit weapons throughout our territories, most times through the illegal diversion of weapons from the licit trade. As a result, small arms and light weapons now pose one of the biggest threats to the national security and economic and social development of many of our small countries. As we have repeatedly stated, small arms and light weapons have been used by those that would seek to destabilize our region through criminal networks involved in the trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings. Those activities pose a dangerous challenge to our security infrastructure and are helping to undermine the economic and social fabric of our nations, as they contribute to a rise in crime, particularly violent crime.

Faced with that multifaceted threat, CARICOM States have welcomed the degrees of cooperation undertaken at the bilateral, subregional, regional and international levels, including through the work of the CARICOM secretariat, the Organization of American States and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, all of which have provided assistance in the implementation of the Programme of Action and other agreements aimed at controlling the proliferation of those weapons.

In that context, CARICOM States welcome the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, whose first substantive session was held in June of this year. As CARICOM stated at that time, we believe that an effective, multilateral and legally binding international instrument on identifying and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons would be an important contribution to our existing national, bilateral and regional efforts to control a phenomenon that taxes our human and financial resources so heavily. CARICOM States will remain fully engaged in the deliberations of the Working Group, and we look forward to the next stage in its work. We also continue to call for progress to be made in other areas, including commitments to establish transfer controls in producer countries, the exercise of greater levels of scrutiny of end-user certificates by producer States and a real commitment to regulate brokering. Utilizing the tools currently at our disposal, and creating new ones, will ensure that combined national and collective action will enable the international community to eradicate this deadly trade.

Another issue of overriding concern to the Caribbean region remains the transhipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea. CARICOM countries maintain that those shipments and the concurrent potential for accidents represent a serious threat to the economic development and security of our region. In that context, CARICOM welcomed the 2000 NPT Review Conference's explicit recognition of the concerns of small island developing States and other coastal States with regard to the transportation of radioactive materials by sea, and viewed it as an acknowledgement of the responsibility of the international community to protect the marine space of en-route coastal States from the risks inherent in the transport of those materials.

We are particularly encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in that regard, including the adoption of the Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste and the annual resolution adopted by the IAEA General Conference on measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation and transport safety and waste management. We call on all States to fully implement those instruments, including the call for States shipping radioactive materials to provide assurances to potentially affected States that their national regulations take into account IAEA transport regulations and to provide relevant information relating to shipments of such materials. CARICOM States recognize the need for safety and security relating to those shipments and the right of States under article IV of the NPT to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, we affirm that those considerations should not be inimical to the sustainable development of other States.

It is clear that the international community must place renewed emphasis on the global disarmament agenda as we grapple with unresolved issues and seek ways to address new threats, including the concern that weapons of mass destruction could come into the possession of non-State actors. CARICOM States therefore also reaffirm that the time has come to take a firm decision to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We have agreed that there are many new threats confronting us,

as well as old threats that continue to haunt us. It is therefore time to reaffirm our commitment to existing principles and to agree on some new strategies to address these threats.

While there is ample reason to be discouraged, it is unacceptable, and indeed impossible, for the international community to turn its back on certain disarmament issues. The previous decade was marked by increased commitments, by all Member States, to social and economic development. Yet there can be no development without security, and no security without development. We must therefore redouble our efforts in implementing both sides of the equation; otherwise we will have failed to live up to the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

**The Chairman** (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to remind the First Committee of the importance of maintaining silence as we listen to speakers. I would also ask that members carry out any conversations outside the room. Any conversations that must take place in the room should be conducted with the greatest respect for those who are speaking.

**Ms. Mangray** (Guyana): Allow me, at the outset, to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee during the fifty-ninth session. My congratulations go likewise to the other members of the Bureau. Your leadership, Mr. Chairman, will be essential to the success of our deliberations.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In addition, I wish to offer a national perspective on a few points of particular interest to us.

As a small and vulnerable State, Guyana attaches importance to the system of collective security offered by the United Nations. New risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction pose a serious danger to international peace and security. It is only as we move beyond the prescriptions of the preliminary and procedural and as the spirit of negotiation is fully explored that we will bring about the required attitudinal shift in this body.

We are forcibly reminded that the dangers of nuclear catastrophe are still very real and present. It is impossible to guarantee, in an unstable world such as ours, that nuclear weapons will not be used either intentionally or inadvertently. Only a complete prohibition of such weapons, binding upon all States, would be able to reduce the risk of a nuclear disaster. Nuclear experiments should be harnessed only to peaceful purposes, in the service of global development.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (NPT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), while admittedly useful as restraints, are too limited to provide the assurance that is needed. My Government therefore urges the international community to move swiftly towards the total elimination of these weapons, coupled with an undertaking to discontinue their production.

Simultaneously, we must redouble our efforts to curb the flow of conventional weapons, which serve to fuel conflicts throughout the world.

We note with concern that the maintenance of international peace and security remains beset by many obstacles, not least of which is a lack of progress on the disarmament agenda. As I have said, that, together with new risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, poses serious dangers to international peace and security.

There are today more peacekeeping operations than the international community appears able, or willing, to sustain. Increasingly, we will have to invest more in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacebuilding, but also in development, to fully address and treat the root causes of tension. That approach is valid not only in inter-State conflicts, but also in intra-State ones, which have multiplied.

The initiative undertaken by the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament are commendable. We look forward to more work being conducted in the area of disarmament and development.

We strongly support the work being done on the drafting on an international instrument on small arms and light weapons. My Government continues to be engaged in that very important process. My Government believes that, optimally, a legally binding document would ensure progressive results. Given the destructive impact of this trade, serious consideration of this subject should remain a priority in the work of the First Committee.

My delegation also welcomes the work being done to eliminate anti-personnel landmines and looks forward to the implementation of the plan of action to be produced by the Nairobi summit on a mine-free world, which is to be held in November of this year.

Above all, we must intensify our search for a collective system of security upon which all States can rely for their protection. The outline of such a system is to be found in the Charter of the United Nations. We need only to build upon it to ensure its practicality. The First Committee must vigorously reaffirm, and be cognizant of, the priorities of all Member States, especially developing countries, and of the international community at large as drafting the blueprint for future progress and development becomes increasingly important.

In conclusion, my delegation attaches great importance to reaching general agreement on how the First Committee may be transformed into a body that enjoys the confidence and support of all States. With regard to improving the effectiveness of the work of the First Committee, my delegation stands ready to contribute. For only through a truly collaborative and inclusive approach can we produce outcomes satisfactory to, and binding on, all Member States. Clearly, our concerns have changed to accommodate the circumstances of today's world. As we continue to serve the cause of global peace and security, the imperative for change should become irresistible.

**Mr. Hannesson**: (Iceland): We wish you, Mr. Chairman, the Bureau and the First Committee and its staff well in the important work ahead.

Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area, aligned itself with the statement delivered last Monday, at our 2nd meeting, by Ambassador Chris Sanders of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union. I would, however, like to add a few remarks in my own national capacity.

The First Committee has, in some ways, led the way in making concrete proposals to streamline committee work in the General Assembly and to make it more effective. I would like to express our support for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee. We support the idea of fewer but better studies and fewer but more focused resolutions that we would have a realistic chance of following up. We also support a system by which we could decide the measures needed and how long they should take — and by which we would renew those measures if we considered them necessary in the light of experience. Furthermore, we support the proposed thematic grouping of agenda items.

So far, during the general debate, many speakers have expressed great concern with regard to the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and the real possibility that rogue States and terrorist groups could acquire such weapons. My Government believes that is an issue of central concern for world security that must be effectively addressed by the international community.

As an island State located in the middle of some of the busiest sea lanes in the world, we attach great importance to any support for the Proliferation Security Initiative, whose goal is to prevent the flow of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and related materials to and from States and non-State actors.

As we have stated often, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a fundamental pillar of arms control. It must be preserved and strengthened. Despite the lack of agreement in the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, we hope for a fruitful outcome in the Committee's work.

**Mr. Paranhos** (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Brazil, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I likewise wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. You have the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation.

(*spoke in English*)

My delegation has already had an opportunity to address this body on behalf of the Rio Group. We also fully associate ourselves with the views expressed by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition. During the thematic debate, the Brazilian delegation, representing the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), will specify some aspects of interest for the Group. Today I wish to highlight a few elements of the agenda that are of particular significance to Brazil.

Brazil shares the concerns expressed by various delegations during this general debate with regard to the serious threats to peace and security represented by terrorism and by the possible proliferation of weapons

of mass destruction (WMD). Undoubtedly, there is widespread concern about the risk of WMDs falling into the hands of non-State actors.

In this general debate, there seems to be a growing perception that the multilateral system devoted to disarmament and non-proliferation is facing a credibility crisis. In Brazil's view, that situation stems from the fact that a lack of political commitment is perceived, especially on the part of nuclear-weapon States, with regard to the implementation of the basic understanding underlying the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As the New Agenda Coalition stated earlier, Non-Proliferation-Treaty commitments cannot be complied with selectively. In that connection, Brazil — along with the overwhelming majority of other countries — believes that the only real guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again.

Brazil does not participate in any strategic alliance or security system that includes the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons. Our commitment to non-proliferation has been consistent and remains unabated. Long before its accession to the NPT, Brazil had already decided that national security should not be predicated upon the development of nuclear armaments. In the 1960s, we were involved in the negotiations that led to the creation of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in an inhabited area through the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In the 1980s, the Brazilian Constitution prohibited the use of nuclear energy for other than exclusively peaceful purposes. In the early 1990s, Brazil signed the Quadripartite Safeguards Agreement with Argentina, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), placing all our nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards. We are active members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

*Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

The growing emphasis on strengthening non-proliferation mechanisms in the current international situation must be accompanied by similar efforts in terms of disarmament and enhancement of international cooperation for the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Instead, regrettably, we see that new rationales are being sought for the maintenance or development of new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons. The unfortunate consequence of such development is that countries may be led to view nuclear weapons as security enhancers.

On the issue of curbing proliferation, a number of countries believe that, by avoiding time-consuming diplomatic negotiations and resorting to arrangements of limited participation and more flexible implementation, they will address sensitive questions in a more efficient manner. Brazil believes that ad hoc mechanisms cannot replace the efficiency and legitimacy of multilaterally negotiated instruments. Mechanisms negotiated among a relatively reduced number of countries tend to hamper even further the credibility of existing instruments, which we should strive to preserve.

In May of next year, we will face the task of reviewing the implementation of the instrument devoted to disarmament and non-proliferation with the widest membership, the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Despite increasing signs of frustration and recent doubts in some quarters about its relevance to deal with persistent and new threats, we all agree that the NPT is a necessary instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The strength, credibility and long-term validity of the NPT depend upon a fine balance among its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. That fundamental understanding must be upheld if we want the Treaty to remain relevant for the international community. Efforts with a view to universalizing the Treaty should also be constantly pursued. International peace and security can only benefit from the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Disregard for the provisions of article VI may ultimately affect the basic credibility of the Treaty.

At the same time, the exercise of the right of all NPT parties, without discrimination, to engage in research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes cannot be in any way jeopardized by attempts to rewrite or reinterpret article IV. In the same vein, no new obligations under article III can come into existence without a proper and explicit decision by the membership of the Treaty. Looking ahead to 2005, we are convinced that the success of the forthcoming NPT Review Conference will depend upon its ability to

achieve progress in the inextricably related issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, while at the same time reaffirming explicitly the right of all parties to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The continued paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament has produced the regrettable perception that there is a progressive disengagement on the part of key players. The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament is to no one's benefit. Brazil is committed to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Brazil has expressed its full support for the proposal made by the representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia and Sweden — the five ambassadors' proposal — and has also expressed its readiness to participate in informal discussions on new issues related to the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

The idea of negotiating a verifiable fissile-material treaty represents an important step in bringing the Conference on Disarmament back to the negotiations arena. At the same time, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is imperative in order to fulfil the mandate of the Conference.

Brazil fully supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Unfortunately, however, there seems to be no sense of urgency regarding its entry into force. We are confronted with the paradox that, while no such prospects are foreseeable, the establishment of the international monitoring system is well advanced. That system cannot function without the corresponding legal obligations it has been conceived to monitor. We call upon on all States, and particularly on those needed to bring the Treaty into force, to adhere to and promptly ratify the CTBT.

The enormous challenges confronting the First Committee call upon us to demonstrate a deep sense of responsibility and commitment to uphold the integrity of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Finally, we are convinced that the concept of disarmament is closely related to that of development. There can be no doubt, for instance, that arms expenditures divert substantial financial, material and human resources that otherwise could be invested in social programmes. In that regard, let me recall that, on 20 September, 108 countries supported the New York Declaration on the Action Against Hunger and Poverty. That Declaration encourages the international community to give careful consideration to the report prepared by Technical Group on Innovative Financing Mechanisms, which explores ways to find new resources for development. Those new and innovative financing mechanisms would raise funds urgently needed to meet the Millennium Developments Goals while complementing and ensuring stable and predictable long-term resources.

With regard to the ongoing debate on the revitalization of the First Committee, the Brazilian delegation would like to recall the comments it has already made on that issue. The reorganization of the agenda of the First Committee into a reduced number of clusters could make it more clear and understandable. The early election of the Bureau could facilitate the follow-up of agreed subjects and could allow for the convening of advanced consultations with a view to the following session. Considerations about the better use of time should be respectful of the right of delegations to express freely whatever they deem to be important, and of the need to grant to each of them the appropriate amount of time. The possibility of excluding some agenda items should be carefully examined case by case. Suggestions on the biennialization or triennialization of resolutions could come from the Chair, but decisions in that regard must be taken with the backing of Member States. Better use should be made of the provisions contained in Articles 11 and 13 of the Charter of the United Nations regarding cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security.

**Mr. Almatrafi** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a great pleasure to warmly congratulate Ambassador De Alba on his election to the chairmanship of the First Committee for this year. I am fully confident that he will conduct the work of the Committee in the best way possible. I also wish every success to the other members of the Bureau.

Achieving international peace and security, which is the main purpose of the United Nations under its Charter, has become a matter of urgency for all nations and peoples. We believe that that purpose cannot be fulfilled through the efforts of one country or one regional group alone, but rather through reinforcing multinational diplomacy within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament

Commission and through emphasizing the role of the United Nations in dealing with issues that pose a threat to international peace and security.

My Government advocates support for the international non-proliferation and disarmament regimes established by the relevant conventions and international organizations. At the same time, we stress the importance of engaging in mutual dialogue, adopting a comprehensive and objective approach and avoiding selectivity so that we may deal effectively and efficiently with the issues on the agenda of the First Committee.

We in Saudi Arabia share the international community's concern about the risks posed by the possession and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). We also believe in the need to achieve our common goal of strengthening and promoting the universality and role of international conventions on the prohibition or non-proliferation of WMDs both by States and by non-State actors. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has manifested that belief by acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions. We have also been constant participants in international efforts to promote adherence to those treaties and to advance their universality. We attach great importance to reactivating the role of those international instruments at the national level, and have done so ourselves by adopting regulations and legislation.

With regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Saudi National Authority, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, participated in a regional workshop for the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council countries, held in September 2003. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen the role of the Convention vis-à-vis the Gulf Cooperation Council. Similarly, in September of this year, our National Authority held its own training workshop on finding the best way to implement the Convention at the national level.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty provides an international framework for action to achieve the concrete success of non-proliferation policies. We believe that the best and only way to ensure that we can combat nuclear risks and eliminate proliferation is to dismantle nuclear weapons, in accordance with what was decided by the nuclear countries at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Consequently, we would like to strengthen and emphasize the Conference's Final Document, as well as to promote the purposes and objectives of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

We hope that the 2005 Review Conference will provide a good opportunity for participating countries to carry out a productive dialogue and to assess international efforts in this area. We hope that the Conference will be a success.

With regard to implementing and strengthening efforts aimed at the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, my country attaches great importance to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which called on all countries to combat and halt the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery. We hope that the resolution, as well as previous resolutions aimed at halting the proliferation of WMDs, will be respected by all countries. In that connection, we pledge our full cooperation with the Council Committee established pursuant to the resolution to follow up on implementation.

The States and peoples of the Middle East are gravely concerned about the lack of concrete success that non-proliferation policies have had in that important area of the world. Dismantling all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and nuclear weapons in particular, is a definite goal of all the countries and peoples of the region. The failure to make tangible progress in that regard, and in particular the lack of universality in the Middle East of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is rooted in Israel's continued rejection of all the resolutions and appeals of the international community and in its refusal to place all its nuclear installations under the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards regime. Israel is the sole State in the region not to have done so. Exempting Israel from international pressure to free the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction — and in particular nuclear weapons — and employing a double standard with regard to non-proliferation policies raises a significant question for the States and peoples of the region. Here in the First Committee we have spoken of the right of the people of our region to enjoy security and stability by declaring the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, like those established in other regions. We wonder why it is that Israel will not follow the example of South Africa and other countries and dismantle its nuclear arsenal in order to demonstrate its

good intentions and desire for peace with its neighbours.

The international community and international organizations have a political and historical responsibility to enforce and implement all international resolutions calling for the removal of all weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East, and especially nuclear weapons, without discrimination or exceptions.

Our attention should also be focused on combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which pose a grave threat to both individuals and societies. We in Saudi Arabia are working seriously and effectively to combat the proliferation of such weapons through national monitoring and controls.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its support for the work of the First Committee in order that we may reach positive results that promote the multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament regime, with a view to achieving the lofty Charter goal of peace and security for all nations and all peoples.

**Mr. Musambachime** (Zambia): I would like to congratulate Ambassador De Alba and the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved election as officers of the First Committee. I wish at the outset to pledge my delegation's full cooperation. Zambia has appreciated and continues to appreciate the commitment of Ambassador De Alba's country, Mexico, to the achievement of general and complete disarmament. His well-acknowledged experience in multilateral diplomacy will undoubtedly be an asset in our efforts to steer our work to successful conclusion.

My delegation also wishes to thank Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his inspiring introductory remarks highlighting the most pressing disarmament and international security issues, which he addressed to the First Committee at its 2nd meeting, held on Monday, 4 October 2004. My delegation shares his optimism about the future and about further achievements in global disarmament. In spite of the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament, Zambia notes with satisfaction the progress made over the past year in other areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation wishes to encourage members of the Committee to approach this session with their usual professional wisdom and in full appreciation of their heavy responsibility of contributing to international peace and security. There is a need for members to strive to break the impasse in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and in the Disarmament Commission. It is the advice given by individual members of this Committee to their respective Governments that will help overcome the difficulties in the negotiations going on in those two bodies. Zambia feels that dealing first with those issues on which consensus exists could facilitate and accelerate the process.

Today my delegation will speak in broad terms on issues of general and complete disarmament and non-proliferation. Detailed interventions will be made later. My delegation welcomes the initiative to have an interactive discussion, as it will offer smaller delegations such as mine the opportunity to contribute on these important issues.

Zambia is committed to strengthening multilateralism through continued support for the existing multilateral disarmament machinery. Strong multilateral legal institutions will in fact strengthen non-proliferation efforts. Zambia has subscribed and continues to subscribe to the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which we consider to be a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. However, my country is concerned that recent developments around the world have tended to undermine the NPT regime.

In the 36 years since the Non-Proliferation Treaty was adopted, the international community has steadily made progress in nuclear disarmament. Two reviews of the NPT, undertaken in 1995 and 2000 respectively, demonstrated the international community's consensus on the need to achieve nuclear disarmament. It is my hope that, despite difficulties, the preparations for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will continue to move forward.

The United Nations Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention, has lived up to expectations. Zambia thanks the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for its leading role in operationalizing the Convention. My

Government wishes to further commend the United Nations Mine Action Service for maintaining close liaison with States parties. The sending of a fact-finding mission to Lusaka, Zambia's capital, in July and August of this year was highly appreciated by my Government. During that visit, UNMAS helped the Zambian Mine Action Centre to enhance its programmes, and there was an exchange of views on Zambia's participation in the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, which is scheduled to be held from 29 November to 3 December 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya.

My delegation also wishes to commend the United States Government for its continued support in the area of capacity-building at the Zambian Mine Action Centre. It is our hope that other development partners will join the United States in strengthening Zambia's capacity in addressing the problem of landmines at both national and regional levels.

Zambia is pleased to note that the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention is to be held in Africa, a continent that is heavily affected by landmines. This is a recognition of the continuing problem of landmines on our continent. In some countries, the problem of landmines dates back to the Second World War. More recently, it has been a consequence of wars of national liberation. The intra-State and inter-State conflicts of our time have also exacerbated the problem.

The First Committee is meeting at a difficult time. The catalogue of unaccomplished tasks in our efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament is very long. Accordingly, it is the view of my delegation that urgent steps need to be taken to achieve the goal we have set for ourselves.

The increase in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons poses a threat to the survival of States. Uncontrolled access by non-State actors to these types of weapons leads to instability. Accordingly, it is extremely urgent for the international community to implement the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2001. The First Committee can do humankind a service by acting in unison to prevent terrorists from abusing the benefits of globalization to achieve their ends. The commission of violent crimes using small arms and man-portable air defence systems has resulted in death and destruction in many, many countries.

In view of those challenges to humankind, the First Committee should lead the efforts of the United Nations to reassert its authority through the universal enforcement of multilateral conventions. To achieve that, the United Nations has to strengthen multilateralism. The multilateral imperative will strengthen bilateral and collective efforts. Since most threats to international peace and security affect all countries, no country should take it upon itself alone to enforce multilateral agreements and conventions.

The Committee can contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security. In accomplishing its work, the Committee can help free up resources for human development that are now being spent on armaments. With those realities in mind, the multilateral imperative persuades us to rethink the rationale of the relationship between disarmament and development. In my Government's view, the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will effectively address all those pressing matters.

**Mr. Stagno Ugarte** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first of all to congratulate Ambassador De Alba on his well deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure him of my delegation's unconditional support in ensuring the success of our work. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation fully supports the statement made by the delegation of Brazil on behalf of the Rio Group, to which we have the honour of belonging. I shall therefore confine my statement to a few aspects of special importance to my country.

I would like to touch briefly on the three existing non-proliferation regimes and their weaknesses in terms of implementation, verification, application and universality. First, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the most universal of the three regimes, since we are just three plus one short of universality — has no active mechanism for implementation because it has no permanent administrative body and depends exclusively on five-year review conferences. In addition, the NPT has no verification or enforcement mechanisms, with the exception of the article III requirement that States parties must sign safeguards agreements with the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Although the NPT does not confer any express mandate on the Security Council, the IAEA Statute gives the Agency's Board of Governors the power to refer cases of non-compliance with IAEA safeguards to the Security Council. Here we must point out that, even when the IAEA has referred a case to the Council, the Council took no action owing to a disagreement among the five permanent members.

Additional protocols are invaluable in guaranteeing transparency and mutual confidence, for they enable the IAEA to have recourse to the inspection of undeclared sites and to carry out more intrusive inspections. However, only 55 States have signed and ratified additional protocols, and in 46 of the 71 States that carry out significant nuclear activities additional protocols are still not in force. States that have not implemented additional protocols are avoiding the establishment of mutual confidence-building measures that are indispensable for peaceful coexistence among nations.

As a State party to the NPT we are frankly disappointed by the weak — or should I say, non-existent — commitment that has been shown so far by the nuclear Powers to fully honour their disarmament commitments under article VI of the Treaty. Our frustration is increased by the lack of progress in complying with the 13 practical steps agreed upon at the 2000 Review Conference. The intransigence of the three plus one with regard to universalizing the NPT is disconcerting and is a genuine affront to the international community. We begin with the principle that every nuclear arsenal is an inherent threat to international peace and security.

We are alarmed to note, therefore, that since the last review of the NPT some States have announced their withdrawal from the Treaty. It is imperative that, at the next Review Conference, in 2005, the international community renew its efforts to make nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and irreversible reality.

Turning to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), adopted by 144 States parties, the spectre of those proscribed weapons has reappeared because of the shortcomings of that regime, which has no system of verification or any permanent body to ensure its implementation. Nevertheless — and irrespective of any limitations that may exist in the draft BWC protocol — it certainly offers more guarantees than had already existed, and in that sense it represents a step forward. Similarly, we are encouraged that General Assembly resolution 42/37 gives the Secretary-General the power to initiate investigations on any use of biological weapons.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is the only non-proliferation regime with its own organization, with restrictions on exports of dual-use technologies and a built-in verification system, but it still remains to be universalized. Fifty-one additional members are needed. In addition, to date only 12 per cent of existing and known arsenals have been destroyed, which represents a serious compliance shortfall.

Costa Rica congratulates the Government of Sweden for creating the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, an independent international body chaired by the very well-known and experienced Hans Blix. We eagerly await its first concrete proposals designed to reduce the dangers inherent in weapons of mass destruction.

We cannot allow the existence of special exceptions to verification. Verification is inseparable from mutual confidence, and any restrictions or conditions placed upon it are a breach of confidence. In that respect, in view of the growing reluctance of some States to accept a broad verification regime, the international community should promote more binding verification processes and should make use of every avenue provided by the existing legal frameworks in the field of arms control.

As we review the Security Council's action — or should I say inaction — to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we wonder whether the Council has truly discharged its obligations and responsibilities. We are obliged to call upon the Council to comprehensively fulfil its obligations and fully shoulder its responsibilities arising from the referral processes outlined in article III, section B, paragraph 4, and article XII, section C, of the IAEA Statute, as well as in the NPT and in article VI of the CBW.

Concerning small arms and light weapons, my country reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action adopted in 2001 at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Costa Rica supports the negotiation of an international instrument setting

up effective mechanisms to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons.

We should ask ourselves whether the 191 States Members of the United Nations have the political will to regulate the international trade in arms in order to eradicate the transfers and sales that, owing to a lack of conscience and transparency, have irresponsibly contributed to more deaths. Over the past five decades we have never seen the Security Council act on its responsibilities arising under Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, which recognizes the linkage between disarmament and development when it entrusts that body with creating systems to regulate arms in order "to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security".

In a world with finite resources, in which all States must prioritize their spending, it is incomprehensible that developing countries should spend $22 billion a year on arms when that amount would make it possible for them to achieve some of the Millennium Development Goals, such as universal primary education and reduced child mortality. The over-armament/underdevelopment dynamic is a tragic reality that is continuing to bleed many of our peoples.

The $956 billion spent globally on defence in 2003 represents more than 17 times the amount spent globally on official development assistance for development and exceeds the aggregate indebtedness of the 64 countries that make up the group of low-income countries.

History has shown us time and again that no one can achieve security by buying more weapons. Security can, however, be brought about by remedying injustices, relieving wants, following shared objectives and championing universal values. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, we have followed a path to false security, one which has left us totally vulnerable to poverty, ignorance and disease. We have promoted a type of security that wastes the most important of our available resources and hijacks and amputates development.

In 2001 alone, 16 billion units of ammunition were manufactured: more than two bullets for each person on the planet. That means that each one of us is under the gun, and every minute of every hour of every day someone dies.

Impelled by that tragic situation, Costa Rica has been advocating the adoption by the international community of a legally binding instrument that will put an end to irresponsible sales and transfers of weapons that contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Horrified by the carnage and scandalized by the indifference to it, we firmly and enthusiastically support the proposed arms trade treaty, and we appeal to all Member States committed to transparency in arms trade and to the full respect for human rights to support that preventive instrument. The treaty would establish a series of limits on the arms trade based on existing obligations under international law and estimations of anticipated use.

It would set out existing obligations arising from the Geneva Conventions, the Mine-Ban Treaty and the Convention against Genocide, so that those criteria can be incorporated into the national legislation of each State. It is time to put an end to the irresponsible supplying of arms and to empty arsenals of illicit weapons. Seven Member States have so far publicly manifested their support for this type of initiative, and Costa Rica is pleased to be one of them.

There is no doubt that current international realities are compelling States to take additional measures to strengthen existing disarmament regimes and to take more pragmatic approaches to new challenges such as terrorism. In the realm of disarmament, vertical proliferation is of special concern. The United Nations must take the lead in preventing weapons of mass destruction — whether nuclear, chemical or biological — from falling into the hands of terrorists. We must also adopt effective mechanisms to prevent the transfer of conventional and small arms to terrorist groups.

The United Nations must take the necessary leadership role in combating international terrorism. That is why Costa Rica has proposed that the General Assembly begin an in-depth review of the various organs and mandates of the United Nations related to terrorism in order to eliminate redundancies, unify resources and centralize decision-making in a single professional, permanent and impartial organ at the very core of the organic structure of the United Nations system. We therefore propose the creation of the post of a United Nations high commissioner on terrorism.

Multilateralism is the only way to bring about general and complete disarmament. It is the basic

principle underlying all negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee must result from a revitalization of the General Assembly and of the Working Group created for that purpose. Any reform of the First Committee should involve also disarmament mechanisms such as the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the Disarmament Commission in New York.

It is important that the reform process be carried out in a transparent manner, with the participation of all Member States. To that end, our country will actively participate in the informal consultations held during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Esipila** (Kenya): Madam, my delegation is confident that, under your able guidance, the Committee will be able to make tangible and substantive progress in addressing the issues before us. I wish to assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

The current world situation remains fluid and volatile, and the threat of terrorism remains a real and present danger. In view of recent revelations of widespread underground and possibly terrorist-linked arms operations, it behooves us to take determined action to address this menace. The ever-present danger of the possibility of weapons of mass destruction falling into non-State hands adds urgency to the international community's efforts to strengthen multilateral legally binding agreements with the necessary verification provisions.

The Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region is especially vulnerable to the threat posed by the easy availability of small arms and light weapons, which have escalated the conflicts in the region. Ongoing conflicts have resulted in massive numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. These, in turn, have placed unprecedented strain on the resources of the region and, indeed, led to reversals in economic development.

It is against that background that Kenya welcomed the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument on marking and tracing such weapons. Kenya supports regional efforts to implement the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 International Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons and notes the critical role of international assistance for the implementation of the Programme.

Kenya is a key player in subregional efforts to combat trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In May 2000 Kenya hosted the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Conference, which culminated in the signing of the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Consequently, the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons was signed on 21 April last, and it remains the only binding instrument on small arms in the region. States parties signatories to the Protocol are expected to ratify it no later than 31 December this year.

Kenya wishes to urge the international community to support the Nairobi secretariat in the implementation of the Protocol. The secretariat is actively involved in spearheading the anti-personnel arms and light weapons offensive as well as preparations for the 2006 United Nations Review Conference.

I join my dear colleague from Zambia in reiterating that anti-personnel landmines are among the most inhumane of all weapons devised by man. They not only maim and kill innocent civilians but also directly contribute to the perpetuation of poverty and underdevelopment in the affected regions. It was therefore with a sigh of relief that the States parties negotiated the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — the Ottawa Convention — and ensured its entry into force in March 1999. The Convention is the most successful global disarmament and humanitarian treaty and has been ratified by over 140 States.

The consequent successful conclusion of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held at Bangkok from 15 to 19 September 2003, was a testament to the importance attached by the world community to the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

As with other disarmament efforts, the fight against the scourge of landmines has been most successfully fought under regional and international umbrellas. Kenya therefore welcomes the adoption of the Common African Position on anti-personnel landmines, adopted last month in New York during the African Union Ministerial Meeting. The Common

African Position identified priority action areas on which Africa should focus, such as mobilization of resources to clear mined areas and assistance to mine victims, among others.

The Ottawa Convention is approaching a watershed in its implementation. Kenya will be hosting the First Review Conference of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, also known as the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World, from 29 November to 3 December this year. Kenya attaches great importance to this important gathering, which will take stock of the progress made since the entry into force of the Convention in 1999 and set the agenda for action over the next five years to ensure that the humanitarian objectives of the Convention are met. The Conference will thus be a crucial milestone in the operationalization of the Convention.

We wish to thank all those that have contributed to the hosting of the 2004 Nairobi Summit and invite all States and interested organizations to participate at the highest level.

Nuclear weapons remain a global challenge. In that regard, Kenya believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a cornerstone on which nuclear disarmament should be founded. Kenya urges the universal application of the strengthened safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), especially the Additional Protocol. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be an occasion to reassess the implementation of the NPT, taking into consideration the security benefits that would accrue to all Member States upon its successful implementation.

*The Chairman returned to the Chair.*

Kenya remains concerned that a fissile material cut-off treaty has yet to be negotiated and that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force. Kenya also attaches great importance to the successful implementation of both the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

In a fluid and volatile world, the role of the United Nations is coming under even closer scrutiny, as are the roles of the Committees of the General Assembly. Scrutiny of the United Nations and of the First Committee will of necessity take into consideration the extent to which the Committee is able to meet the aspirations of its members to the achievement of collective security. We look forward to working constructively with all delegations on practical ways in which to achieve our common goal.

**Mr. Alnajar** (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. We are convinced that, thanks to your wisdom and political and diplomatic experience, we will make further progress and attain the objectives to which we aspire. I have the honour to work with you as Rapporteur of the First Committee, representing the Group of Asian States.

Yemen reaffirms its resolve to make every effort to safeguard international peace and security. My country will never hesitate to sign, endorse and ratify relevant international treaties and disarmament instruments aimed at preventing and monitoring proliferation; that also applies to all counter-terrorism instruments. We are firmly convinced that such instruments are essential for the creation of suitable conditions for achieving international peace and security, particularly in the light of the accelerated developments and changes and the acts of violence and terrorism that have occurred on the international scene in the last few years. What I have said reflects our clear political vision for supporting the disarmament efforts of the international community's and of the United Nations as contained in the Final Document of the 1978 special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We support the conclusions of the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and we have supported all efforts to draft such an international instrument. Yemen believes that the desired objective is to protect humanity from the scourge of small arms and light weapons, which are no less dangerous than the threat of the use of nuclear weapons or the possibility that weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of terrorists. Our political leadership attaches paramount importance to the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This problem has various complex dimensions in which multiple historical considerations and consequences of the colonial periods and the armed conflicts prevailed

in parts of the country, in addition to the social characteristics of the people of Yemen.

We have no time to review here the various measures taken by Yemen; these were set out in the national report submitted at the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, held in New York in 2001. The Government of Yemen implemented a programme to buy back weapons held by civilians and arms merchants in the amount of approximately $10 million. That effort was successful, thanks to the assistance of our friends. We used every medium at our disposal — radio, television and newspapers — to strengthen awareness and a culture that does not promote the use of small weapons and to encourage the people to turn in their weapons. Civil society organizations have played an important role in that programme. We also attended the Conference on the Implementation, by the Arab States, of the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in Cairo under the auspices of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. We would like to participate in the first review conference, which will be held in Algeria in 2005.

Yemen is among the countries that have suffered from the proliferation of anti-personnel mines. We were among the first to ratify the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and On Their Destruction. Yemen's demining programme was one of the most successful in our region.

Despite the international community's efforts to turn the Middle East into a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, we must note that Israel possesses both kinds of weapons outside the context of international monitoring, which poses a grave threat to regional and international security. That violates all relevant international laws and resolutions, which call upon Israel to accede to the international conventions in this area. We appeal to the international community to compel Israel to unconditionally join the NPT and to open its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguard regimes of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My country supports all efforts and proposals aimed at improving the work of the First Committee, in the context of restructuring and reforming the United Nations bodies to ensure the greater effectiveness of its disarmament efforts and international peace. We should like to join others in reiterating that the key to successful reform is political will. Without that, reform can have very limited success.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate that uniting our efforts to reaffirm the principles of the Charter and to increase economic and development assistance to the poorest and least developed countries is the best way in which to ensure international peace and security.

**Mr. Sharma** (India): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

India is firmly committed to multilateralism and to the primacy of multilateral institutions, processes and instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe in the need to revitalize and strengthen the authority and the role of the General Assembly, including its Main Committees. Assembly resolution 58/316 provides the parameters within which we could move in that direction. The effective implementation of the resolutions adopted on the recommendation of the First Committee would make the Committee more productive in providing guidance and direction to other multilateral efforts in the area of arms control and disarmament.

Member States have varying security concerns and priorities, and the First Committee provides them with a forum in which they can outline them to the international community through general statements, thematic interventions and draft resolutions. Any attempt to limit this opportunity will reduce the First Committee's relevance, especially to the States Members of the United Nations that are not represented in the Conference on Disarmament.

The current agenda of the First Committee is derived from the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which enjoys consensus support and reflects a delicate balance in addressing the security concerns of all Member States. Any piecemeal approach to changing the agenda of the First Committee or altering its priorities would erode that consensus and could even paralyse the working of the First Committee.

The failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work is a reflection of the current lack of global consensus on the goals and priorities of the disarmament and arms control agenda. It is also a manifestation of the lack of political will on the part of major players to address the issues that are of concern to other Member States, including the issue of nuclear disarmament. India has shown considerable flexibility with a view to enabling the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work that is balanced and comprehensive. The absence of agreement on an agenda for the Disarmament Commission is a result of the same malaise that is afflicting the Conference on Disarmament. The international community has a collective interest in preserving and strengthening all elements of the institutional triad of disarmament: the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. India remains committed to contributing to that goal.

There is growing concern about the threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, related materials and technology, particularly their possible acquisition by non-State actors. India shares those concerns. We believe that States have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials and technology and their spread to both non-State actors and other States. Aware of its responsibilities arising from the possession of nuclear weapons, India has put in place legislative and administrative measures, including export controls, in this regard. Our record in preventing proliferation is impeccable.

It has become evident that the current nuclear non-proliferation regime is facing major challenges. We need to create a more inclusive and non-discriminatory structure to effectively address current proliferation concerns.

The focus on pursuing the goals of non-proliferation without progress towards global and complete nuclear disarmament may be detrimental and counterproductive. Measures aimed at expanding or perpetuating the existing regimes for export control and technology denial will hinder the peaceful application of nuclear technologies and reinforce the existing divide between nuclear and non-nuclear States by creating a new class of haves and have-nots.

The peaceful use of nuclear energy, including for electricity generation, remains crucial to the economic and social development of many developing and developed countries. It can provide environmentally sustainable energy security. The need for ensuring access to nuclear technologies and materials for peaceful purposes is, therefore, as important as preventing the proliferation of sensitive technologies and materials.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, accidentally or inadvertently, will remain. Only global and complete nuclear disarmament, within a time-bound framework, can totally eliminate the danger of a nuclear war. That was the cornerstone of India's Action Plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons unveiled by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and it continues to be the India's abiding objective today.

While pursuing the goal of nuclear disarmament, it is desirable to take immediate steps to reduce nuclear danger. These could include measures to de-alert and de-target nuclear weapons; and legally binding commitments on no first use of nuclear weapons and on the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Simultaneously, we need to evolve a new global order based on cooperative security and multilateralism. Addressing the legitimate security concerns of States may help in creating an environment conducive to achieving global disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

The growing danger of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction, related materials and technologies has added a new and more menacing dimension to the traditional danger of nuclear war. The international community has demonstrated the will to confront this danger. This was manifested in the adoption by consensus by the General Assembly during the previous two sessions of resolutions, sponsored by India, on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and by the adoption by the Security Council this year of its resolution 1540 (2004). India is presenting such a draft resolution again to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to take measures to combat this danger.

The new challenges can be effectively dealt with only through truly universal and non-discriminatory regimes, such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and by building on them.

There is a need to strengthen international norms against biological weapons. India is committed to the current process of annual meetings of experts and States parties of the BWC to consider specific topics. The 2006 Review Conference will provide an opportunity to put in place mechanisms to further strengthen that instrument and to address in parallel the threat of use of biological weapons by non-State actors.

India's commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention is evident in its exemplary performance in meeting its targets for destruction before the prescribed deadline. We have a collective stake in ensuring that the provisions of the Convention are implemented fully and effectively.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons not only poses a threat to the security of States but also endangers their socio-economic and political stability. The impact of the illicit trade in small arms is aggravated by its links to organized crime, terrorism and trafficking in narcotics. We hope that the United Nations Programme of Action is fully implemented. Commendable progress in negotiations on an instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons has been made. The Second Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in 2005, will provide a useful opportunity to review the progress so far in implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action.

Agreement on a new Protocol on explosive remnants of war under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCWC) shows that multilateral negotiations can achieve significant results provided there is political will. India had the privilege of chairing the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts of the States Parties to the CCWC in 2002 and 2003. India continues to coordinate the Working Group on Explosive Remnants of War, which is deliberating on preventive technical measures and on the implementation of international humanitarian law in the context of explosive remnants of war.

The success of the First Committee will be measured not by how short our statements have become, how the number or the length of the draft resolutions adopted have been reduced or how free and interactive our debates are, but by whether all of these propel the multilateral disarmament forums towards re-engagement and productive discussions and negotiations.

It is our hope that deliberations during the current session of the First Committee and the resolutions that we shall adopt will together provide an impetus to elaborating a global consensus for meeting contemporary challenges, including threats to international security, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the moribund status of multilateral disarmament negotiations.

**Mr. Okio** (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We assure you of our full cooperation. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for the important statement he made at the opening of our Committee's work and for the great efforts he is making as head of his Department.

Along with so many other delegations that have spoken since the beginning of this session, the delegation of Congo is deeply concerned about the disarmament process and by the threat still posed to humanity by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) 26 years after the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

Congo is also concerned about the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral framework for negotiations on disarmament. For the seventh consecutive year, it has been unable to adopt a programme of work. Congo would like to state clearly that the goals of disarmament are far from being reached, while the challenges facing us are growing, particularly with the surge in international terrorism.

We also reiterate that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain priority issues of international peace and security. From that perspective, it is vital for all of us to accede to the international instruments on disarmament. In order to be effective and to fully play their role, multilateral regimes must enjoy the support of their States parties. This is why the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) must be a success in order to preserve the validity of the treaty.

We must also work together to ensure the universalization of instruments, relating to disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and putting an end to the arms race. My country signed the NPT on 23 October 1978, and it appeals to countries not yet having done so to sign it as soon as possible.

The entire disarmament structure must rest upon a respect for commitments undertaken and for the resulting obligations. This is to say that the prospect of developing new nuclear weapons as well as the lack of commitment by the nuclear Powers to an irreversible process of nuclear disarmament are factors that destabilize everything being developed in this realm. We therefore appeal once again to the nuclear Powers to shoulder the responsibilities incumbent upon them by virtue of their status, to honour the commitments they undertook during the 2000 NPT Review Conference and to unambiguously carry out the destruction of their arsenals. A world free from the threat of nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons and, indeed, weapons of any kind is not just a dream. It can become a reality if we actually do something about it. In this context, multilateralism is the only approach to problems of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and threats to international security.

Regarding small arms and light weapons, my delegation duly appreciates the many initiatives that have been taken at various levels to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in such weapons. I give the example, for instance, of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, whose first substantive session was held from 14 to 25 June 2004 in New York, with the participation of 106 States and 62 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This is a step in the right direction, which could be decisive in combating and eliminating the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In Africa, as everyone knows, the weapons used in killings every day are not biological or chemical in nature, but simply small arms and light weapons. That is why my delegation would like the Committee to attach the greatest importance to the process under way on this issue in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted by the United Nations Conference on that subject and in preparing the conference to be held in 2006 to assess the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Turning to anti-personnel landmines, another matter that causes untold suffering in Africa, we are happy to see that there are more and more States parties to that convention, 143 at this stage. This is an opportunity for my country to welcome the harmonizing of the African position on this issue before the Review Conference to be held in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2004. We are sure that the Conference will lend new momentum to efforts to make the Ottawa Convention truly universal.

We realize that we must combine our efforts if we wish to limit — even in a small way — the number of threats that hang over our countries. The countries of Central Africa are thus trying to organize to create conditions conducive to stabilizing the region, which has been plagued by high tensions in recent years. We cannot fail to mention here the important role, in this respect, played by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa in maintaining an ongoing and productive dialogue among Central African countries.

Congo has suffered through the sad experience of a civil war, and we attach the greatest importance to regional and subregional confidence-building measures, since through these measures we can develop synergy that will contribute to creating a climate of trust and cooperation. This is why we regularly seek to improve good-neighbourly relations and cooperation with all the States of the Central African subregion, in particular in terms of combating terrorism. It is in that spirit that my country will actively participate in the international conference on the Great Lakes region, which is to be held in Tanzania in November. We call upon the international community to support the conference.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms that there are no small steps forward in terms of disarmament. Every single step counts, and that is why my delegation supports all international, regional and national efforts to bring about security for all.

**Mr. Maandi** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I am particularly gratified to see you, Sir, with your excellent diplomatic skills, chairing the First Committee. I take this opportunity to congratulate you most warmly and to wish you good luck in the difficult

task ahead of you. You may rest assured that my delegation will support you fully. My congratulations go also to all the other members of the Bureau. I would like further to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Sareva, for the remarkable manner in which he led the work of the Committee during the previous session.

Multilateral disarmament diplomacy is in crisis. The multilateral mechanisms that were created to avert threats posed by weapons to international peace and security are paralysed. Similarly, the authority of the treaties and conventions on abolishing nuclear, biological and chemical weapons is seriously at risk. Mistaken interpretation, selective implementation and non-respect for treaties are shaking the pillars of the entire disarmament architecture.

It would be unforgivable if the effort to disarm and the task of eliminating weapons of mass destruction were to stop at combating horizontal proliferation. To say otherwise would be, in our view, to accept a paradigm that is as absurd as it is dangerous. To pretend otherwise would be to trivialize weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to ignore their genuine dangers.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interdependent and inseparable. Unbalanced treatment of either of those dimensions would enable those deadly weapons to overcome our efforts and the threat would become worse and worse; and, what is even more dangerous, it would send the very dangerous and risky message that nuclear weapons are useful.

Respect for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the next Review Conference will be crucial. That means, for all of us, the full implementation of all its provisions. That is how we understand the Treaty. It would also respect both the letter and the spirit of the Treaty. The Treaty does not in any way provide for a division of the world between those who have nuclear weapons and those who do not. It surely does not tolerate military doctrines which give nuclear weapons pride of place and a strategic position. Possessing such weapons is not an enduring right, but their elimination is a binding legal obligation whose fulfilment cannot be indefinitely postponed. The extension of the NPT does not in any way authorize indefinite possession of nuclear weapons.

Eliminating nuclear weapons would respond to the pressing need to promote universal and non-discriminatory collective security. That means going beyond competition among nuclear Powers and giving genuine expression to the unanimously accepted principle of full security for all. The implementation of that principle cannot be secured either by the eternal possession of nuclear weapons or by horizontal or vertical proliferation.

A sound, rigourous analysis of international relations today would call on us to move away from a military orientation and adopt a revamped strategic approach that would spell the end of the obsolete and anachronistic doctrine of nuclear deterrence and that would discourage any trend towards military supremacy, hegemony or domination. International realities today confirm the relevance of a comprehensive, integrated approach to disarmament, show the validity of the philosophy that has always guided us in this field and highlight the need for general and complete disarmament, with high priority for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In order to attain that goal, multilateralism must be rehabilitated in order to deal with the issue of disarmament. Fragmentary, often selective, approaches have shown their inadequacy. The holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is therefore a matter of urgency. The Disarmament Commission must be set free from all constraints so that it can discharge its mandate as defined in General Assembly decision 52/492.

The NPT regime must be preserved, and the balance between the rights and the obligations of States parties must be maintained. It is incumbent primarily upon nuclear States to implement article VI of the NPT by pursuing negotiations in good faith for the total elimination of nuclear weapons as stated in the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and to meet their commitment to fully eliminate their nuclear arsenals, a commitment undertaken at the sixth Review Conference, held in 2000.

For this we must disencumber the Conference on Disarmament, the sole international negotiating body in the field of disarmament, which remains hostage to certain narrow national interests and the desire to preserve national security at the expense of the interests of all. It must be allowed to adopt a comprehensive approach in order to consider substantive questions and address both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The proposal made by the representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Chile,

Colombia and Sweden — the five ambassadors' proposal — which enjoys wide support, provides a solid, balanced basis on which to help the Conference on Disarmament out of this deadlock, which has lasted far too long.

Confronting nuclear weapons requires universality for NPT and the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The world would be a safer place with the full elimination of biological and chemical weapons stockpiles, which are similarly threatening and deadly. The universalization of and respect for the Conventions on the elimination of biological and chemical weapons remains one of our goals.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. That said, the lack of progress in the field of nuclear disarmament cannot in any way serve as a pretext for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Nuclear proliferation is not in anyone's interest and it must be brought under control. Furthermore, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction has now acquired an entirely new dimension: the possibility that terrorist networks are illicitly trading in nuclear technologies and materials that could be used for the production of weapons of mass destruction is a grave threat for all of us. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) was adopted to meet that threat. It proposed a series of measures to protect us against the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorist groups. By shouldering that responsibility, the Security Council acted in an exceptional manner. It indicated that at the same time, in parallel to the implementation of that resolution, an intergovernmental process should be initiated and carried through with a view to the adoption of an international legal instrument on this matter.

Resolution 1540 (2004) should be confined to filling the gaps in international law with respect to the relationship between weapons of mass destruction and non-State actors. It should not serve to weaken international regimes created by extant treaties. Having said that, the most effective way of combating weapons of mass destruction is, of course, to eliminate them completely.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a disarmament and non-proliferation measure can help to strengthen the NPT regime and consolidate international peace and security. The establishment of such a zone in the Middle East depends on whether Israel — the only country in the region that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — decides to eliminate its nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and to place its nuclear installations under the IAEA safeguards regime.

Israel's nuclear capability, the lack of progress in creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and policies based on double standards are of serious concern to us.

The international community has long been aware of the lethal effect of the accumulation of weapons and called for disarmament as a key pillar of a new international system security. That appeal has become ever more relevant given the many complex threats and challenges confronting humankind today, which make it clear that a prosperous and safe world can be built only on security policies that do not give pride of place to weapons or promote the arms race.

The need for general and complete disarmament, to which we strongly aspire, is based on the firm conviction that one cannot respond to a potential threat to national security with nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, which pose an actual threat. It is also based on the conviction that the world would be a better place and better able to meet new and urgent challenges if the vast resources that would be freed up by ending the arms race were channeled into economic and social development and into increasing well-being at the international level.

Algeria fully supports that vision and for that reason has joined in the varied efforts to bring about disarmament — nuclear, chemical, biological or conventional. We once again displayed our resolute commitment to disarmament in August 2004 by ratifying the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms additional to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We will publicly destroy part of our landmine stock in the days to come.

It is also in that spirit that my country expects to host in 2005 the Regional Conference of the League of Arab States on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. That Conference is an initiative to strengthen

the process of combating the dangerous phenomenon of the illicit trade in small arms, whose destabilizing effects pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

Algeria has always sincerely advocated dialogue and cooperation and endeavoured to strengthen security within the traditional frameworks of membership and solidarity. It is working, together with the other countries of the region, to create an area in the Maghreb that is stable, united, homogenous and prosperous; that is fully involved in the process of the settlement of African conflicts; that participates in reinforcing security and cooperation among the countries of our African continent; and that contributes to efforts to make the Mediterranean an area of peace, cooperation and prosperity.

**Ms. Al-Mulla** (Kuwait): Allow me to extend our congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship and to the members of the Bureau of this very important Committee. On another professional and personal note, I should like to congratulate you on the fact that, for the first time, a woman — Ms. Cheryl Stoute — is Committee Secretary.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Let me express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe for his statement at the beginning of the general debate of the Committee, in which he focused on the very important issues and challenges faced by the international community in the field of disarmament. I wish to express to him our appreciation for all the efforts made by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in strengthening international cooperation and helping to implement all the relevant resolutions and programmes of action.

Kuwait believes in the central role of the United Nations in tackling the major challenges faced by the international community, foremost among which are terrorism and the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as hunger, poverty and the spread of serious diseases such as AIDS and malaria, which afflict the developing countries in particular.

There is indeed a link between such challenges. Security and development are interrelated, and it is difficult to advance in one area if there has been no progress in the other. Means of tackling such issues have been clearly delineated in many conventions, treaties, programmes of action and resolutions adopted at international conferences and meetings held in the past few years.

Members must now implement their commitments, pledges and cooperation through existing mechanisms or work to improve such mechanisms in order to achieve greater effectiveness in their implementation.

At a time when the international community is fully realizing the threats posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security, the required progress to eliminate such threats has not been made because of a lack of political will on the part of certain parties and States and their failure to observe international treaties — something which makes it all the more important to continue our efforts and to take measures to build confidence in order to realize our common objective: a world in which peace and security prevail and that is free of such lethal weapons.

Kuwait believes that such weapons pose a grave and serious threat and need to be dismantled, and accordingly has acceded to numerous conventions and treaties — the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Chemical Weapons Convention; the Biological Weapons Convention; a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), together with its Additional Protocol on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Given our strong belief in the importance of nuclear security, last year we signed the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. In that respect, we urge all States that have not concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA to do so, and we encourage those States that have concluded a safeguards agreement with the IAEA but have not signed the Additional Protocol to do so as well.

We likewise hope that all parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will observe their commitments as stipulated in the Treaty and in their comprehensive safeguards agreements. We hope that they will cooperate closely with the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to resolve any questions that may be asked, or doubts raised, about their programmes, through dialogue and constructive negotiations.

Similarly, we call on Israel, the only State in the Middle East that has not yet acceded to the NPT and that possesses nuclear weapons, to stop flouting international law and relevant resolutions and appeals, to heed the calls of the international community to immediately accede to the Treaty, to dismantle its nuclear stockpiles and to subject all of its nuclear installations to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA. Israel's position destabilizes the balance of power in the Middle East and is a cause of constant concern. We call on the international community to cease forthwith the selling of technology and scientific materials that might promote Israel's nuclear programme or that of any other State that seeks to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

We support the July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the non-use of nuclear weapons in armed conflict. We believe an agreement should be developed to effectively protect non-nuclear States from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Kuwait maintains that it is high time to take the crucial and fateful political decisions necessary to reinforcing existing international resolutions so that our world may be free from WMDs. We therefore call on States possessing nuclear weapons to take the necessary steps to prohibit nuclear proliferation and to dismantle those weapons. This is a key aspect in this respect.

We reiterate our support for the elaboration of a non-discriminatory multilateral treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Although an agenda was not agreed upon during last April's meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, we hope that procedures and measures will be adopted at the Conference to strengthen the NPT with a view to attaining its purposes.

As regards the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we call on the Member States that have not acceded to that Treaty to do so. This call is directed in particular to the 11 countries whose accession is necessary for the CTBT to enter into force. We call on the nuclear Powers to suspend all nuclear tests until the Treaty enters into force.

Kuwait welcomes Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which prohibits the proliferation of WMDs and their materials and their possession by terrorist groups. The relevant authorities in Kuwait have imposed the regulations and legislation necessary to implement that resolution. We believe that strengthening the control and verification mechanisms, as stipulated in most of the international conventions on WMDs and making those conventions universal by acceding to them and abiding by them is the best way to combat the spread of such weapons. Reinforcing control and verification mechanisms must be supported by any means possible.

As regards the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, Kuwait supports efforts aimed at implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms. We welcome the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate a legal instrument on identifying and tracing small arms and light weapons, whose spread has long fanned the flames of many conflicts. These conflicts have claimed thousands of victims and have halted the momentum for development, especially in developing countries.

Finally, Kuwait supports the efforts to improve the working methods of the First Committee. This should be a continuous process. We emphasize the importance of ensuring that reform of the work of the Committee forms part of our efforts to reform the work of the General Assembly as a whole. Consultations on reform should be transparent and comprehensive and should aim, first and foremost, at reaching consensus. Focusing on procedures and methods of work should not take place at the expense of content, since in the absence of the political will necessary to implement resolutions, any efforts aimed at reforming and improving our methods of work will have no substantive impact on the efforts to achieve complete disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament.

**The Chairman** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Permanent Observer of the Holy See and the representatives of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization have asked to make statements. If there is no objection, I will invite those three representatives to make their statements.

I give the floor first to the Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

**Mr. Pfirter** (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): First of all, allow me to say how grateful I am to the members of the First Committee for having been kind enough to grant me the opportunity to address the Committee.

Allow me to start also by extending my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, the body that has historically been linked with the Chemical Weapons Convention and with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) since its inception. The First Committee of the General Assembly is a reliable barometer both of the current state of play and of emerging trends in multilateral disarmament, and in that sense its deliberations are of paramount importance, as indeed they are in the field of non-proliferation.

At the same time, I wish to express my personal satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, a good friend and a representative of Mexico, at the helm. We do not forget the distinguished services your nation has offered in the cause of disarmament. From the nuclear test ban to our own field of chemical weapons, Mexican inspiration, ideas and tenacity have always been present. It was also my privilege, wearing a different hat, to be the one who deposited in Mexico my country's instrument of ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Two years have passed since I came here for the first time as the new Director-General of an organization that, in spite of its youth, had had to face significant challenges. Today, I can report that the OPCW is moving decisively from being a new organization still in the early stages of fulfilling its mandate to being a mature one with a solid and widely recognized record of achievement and the increasing support of the international community. Indeed, the OPCW has just completed 100,000 inspector-days, having inspected more than 750 facilities of various types in 65 States parties. We are also close to conducting our two-thousandth inspection.

The verification regime set out in the Convention is said to be the most complex and ambitious in the history of multilateral disarmament. We inspect former chemical weapons production facilities as well as destruction and storage facilities; but we also monitor the chemical industry, in a gigantic effort that demands a skilled and well trained inspection force — and, of course, the close and active collaboration of the chemical industry around the globe. All those factors — State and private — converge in the successful delivery of our unique programme of disarmament, non-proliferation and international cooperation — the three so-called pillars of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

I indicated last year that, as a result of the First Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to review the operation of the Convention, two action plans had been adopted: one on national implementation of the Convention, the other on its universality. Significant progress has been made on both fronts. With regard to national implementation, our States parties decided to set themselves a deadline of November 2005 for taking stock of how much progress they have made in developing and enacting the national legislation mandated by the Convention and in establishing the required internal mechanisms.

As members know, the Convention is not a self-executing treaty, and it therefore requires that States parties take a number of steps at the national level both to make it operational and to enforce its provisions. Our assessment so far is that much more needs to be done before we reach a stage that can be deemed satisfactory. Many member States — more than half of our membership — are still lagging behind both in terms of implementing and enforcing national legislation and customs controls and in other important areas. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to appeal once more to all member States for full implementation, and to reiterate that we are ready and willing to provide all the necessary assistance, through our implementation-support programmes, to all those who request it.

With regard to universality, we have also made significant progress, and the news is encouraging. I am pleased to report that the OPCW now comprises 166 member States, and the list of States not party to the Convention is getting tantalizingly smaller.

Since we last visited this Committee, last year, the Convention has been strengthened by the accession of many countries, including the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which last December acknowledged that it

possessed chemical weapons. Since its accession, Libya has started disarming under the round-the-clock supervision of our international inspectorate. It has done so in exemplary fashion. Soon, our Executive Council will consider a request by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for conversion of a former chemical weapons production facility, which, if the Executive Council approves the request — as I personally expect it will — will be used to produce pharmaceuticals in the service of Africa and other developing countries in some key and challenging areas. With its accession, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the neighbouring region and the Middle East as a whole have become safer.

Iraq has also recently indicated to us formally its political commitment to the Convention and the decision of the Interim Iraqi Government to prepare the ground for early accession to the Convention once the newly elected Government takes office next year. That is also extremely important, and we remain ready to support and advise Iraq in the process towards full accession.

Important progress has also been registered in Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean. A few States remain outside the realm of the Convention, and we sincerely hope it will be possible for them to join us in the near future.

Justified concerns remain about the Korean peninsula and the Middle East, where large and long-standing conflicts persist. Many believe that we should give up on those regions and let the situation evolve towards a point, in some distant future, when accession to the Convention will no longer be a problem, because all problems will have been resolved. That is logic that is, I am afraid, far from our thinking. Adherence to the Convention would constitute, in any area in the world fraught with tension, a significant confidence-building gesture and encouragement towards peace and ultimate solutions to the problems. I believe that no one can expect any sympathy or understanding towards those who decide to keep the use of chemical weapons as an open option, when the enormous majority of mankind, the broad membership of the United Nations, has already declared those weapons illegal.

Chemical weapons are a heinous means of terror and destruction, aimed at and useful only against unprotected civilians. They have been proscribed by a multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory Convention. What could really justify refraining from joining this treaty, which is in favour of humanity?

Destruction of chemical weapons continues under the verification regime set out in the Convention. Six declared possessor States parties have, to date, declared more than 71,000 tons of chemical agents and nearly 8.7 million munitions and containers. In the United States of America, more than 30 per cent of the arsenal has been destroyed, and new destruction facilities are coming on line in a commendable effort to meet the strict deadlines set out in the Convention.

India is fast approaching the point at which it will have destroyed fully 80 per cent of its stockpiles, and its destruction campaign is thus running ahead of schedule. For that, India has gained the praise of all States members of the OPCW.

The Russian Federation, which possesses the largest known arsenal of chemical weapons in the world, is now moving ahead after some initial delays, thanks to the resolve of its Government and the essential support of the international community through important initiatives such as the Global Partnership. It is true that much more needs to be done in Russia as we move towards the strict deadlines set out in the Convention for the overall destruction process.

Albania has declared a small arsenal, inherited from the cold war days. We have started working with the Albanian authorities and hope that everything will soon be in place for a smooth and short destruction campaign.

The case of Libya has already been referred to.

As I stated, the deadlines set out in the Convention are fast approaching, and this means that the number of destruction facilities will grow in the near future. It also means that States parties need to accelerate — in some cases decisively — the march towards compliance with their obligations under the Convention. That will in turn require a concomitant increase in verification activity by the OPCW Technical Secretariat, as we see to it that we are present at all the required stages of destruction and can thus provide the full assurances the international community needs, in the sense that disarmament by possessor States is indeed complete and irreversible.

We are also continuing our efforts with industry verification, bearing in mind that the non-proliferation

of chemical weapons is another key part of our mandate. Indeed, it is the long-term mandate. In that area, we are also taking steps to ensure that no deviation from legitimate uses is possible. That work is especially important, given the present security situation and the ever-present threat of chemical terrorism.

In this regard let me say that we have continued to contribute to the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council. The Chemical Weapons Convention is not an anti-terrorist instrument, yet the OPCW and the Convention itself quite clearly have a role to play in the overall global struggle of the international community against terrorism. Last year I indicated that we were ready to play our role, in line with Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). We have also noted with satisfaction that, by adopting its resolution 1540 (2004) this past April, on the prevention of access by non-State actors to weapons of mass destruction, the Security Council explicitly recognized the role and responsibilities of the OPCW in the important domain of the non-proliferation of chemical weapons, and, in particular, the struggle against terrorism. The resolution enhances our own responsibility in that crucial task and universalizes many of the obligations already present in the Convention.

Responding to a letter from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), His Excellency Mr. Mihnea Ioan Motoc of Romania, I have confirmed our readiness to provide any technical assistance and advice that are required. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW is fully at the disposal of the Committee, which, I am convinced, could benefit highly from our practical experience after seven years of verification activity.

In the same spirit, we have continued our ongoing close cooperation with the United Nations through the Department for Disarmament Affairs, now firmly established under the leadership of Ambassador Nobuyasu Abe. In the past year we have not only consulted frequently with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, but have also cooperated in the field through our regular participation in meetings organized by it or by the United Nations regional centres.

The relationship still has room to grow, and we intend to build even closer links with the United Nations and its specialized agencies and international organizations, as was restated by the Secretary-General and by me only a few minutes ago, during our meeting. We are doing this, in particular, in the fight against international terrorism and in the sphere of non-proliferation, where we have detected a keen interest, spurred by genuine need, in joining forces against that new challenge to international peace and security.

Like the struggles for liberty and justice, the pursuit of peace requires our constant dynamic and proactive attention. In our humble way, we must make our contribution and at all times pursue the goal of international peace and security through disarmament, non-proliferation and international cooperation.

The OPCW is playing its mandated role in this effort, by pursuing both the prohibition of chemical weapons everywhere and their elimination from the face of the Earth. We will persist in that crucial task until we have achieved the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

**The Chairman** (*spoke in Spanish*): I am certain that the First Committee will consider in detail the progress of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the days to come.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Migliore** (Holy See): Mr. Chairman, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you and the rest of the Bureau upon your election.

We are now on the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The ideals embodied in the Charter — seeking peace through international organization and cooperation — have been a source of hope through the years. Those ideals ought to animate us as much now as they did in 1945. But lately, a sense of fear seems to cloud our vision — fear of terrorist attacks, fear of new wars, fear of a breakdown in the processes of international law. A sign of this fear is the surge in global military spending. Many States are increasing their spending, because they think that larger arsenals of firepower will provide security. Increased reliance on guns, large and small, is leading the world away from, not towards, security.

A clear result of such overspending on the instruments of death is that Governments are much less

able to meet long-term commitments to education, health care and housing. The Millennium Development Goals are left lagging while military priorities claim scarce funds.

The United Nations pioneered studies which show the integral relationship among disarmament, development and security. Security for all is enhanced when disarmament and development steps complement one another. We must emphasize the economic benefits of disarmament measures. Development alternatives to militarism must be the constant work of the First Committee.

It certainly cannot be said that poverty leads directly to terrorism, but it is true that terrorists exploit conditions of poverty in ways that produce heightened conflict and violence. The terrorists use an array of weapons to kill, maim and slaughter. Their global reach means that those weapons are being produced and sold internationally, on black markets as well as by State sponsors. In conjunction with the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, States must look for ways to reduce the easy availability of those weapons through increased export controls and added vigilance over weapon stockpiles.

The fragile state of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at this moment is very worrying, as proliferation of those weapons greatly increases the likelihood of terrorist acquisition. On the immediate horizon is the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. As the three preparatory meetings for the Conference have shown, the NPT is in crisis. The inability even to agree on an agenda or the continuing relevance of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference indicates the diverse perspectives among States parties.

The crisis, however, is far deeper than procedural disagreements. It has to do with the interplay of responsibilities between the Nuclear Weapons States and the non-Nuclear Weapons States. The non-nuclear members of the NPT have a duty not to engage in the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while the nuclear-weapon States have a duty to engage in negotiations leading to the elimination of their nuclear weapons. That was the original bargain of the NPT: non-proliferation in exchange for nuclear disarmament.

As frightening as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their possible acquisition by terrorists are, those issues do not come close to exhausting our disarmament concerns. The spread of conventional weapons, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa, is of extreme concern. The United Nations and its Member States must support all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts in Africa and everywhere there is a need for such activities.

In two months, Nairobi will host the First Review Conference of States parties to the anti-personnel landmines Convention, also known as the Nairobi Summit on a mine-free world. From the beginning, the Holy See supported the process of the Ottawa Convention, which has yielded a number of positive results in the fight against anti-personnel mines. Nonetheless, much still needs to be done if humanity is to be set free from those terrible, treacherous devices.

The discussion of the agenda item entitled "Culture of peace" has always taken place in the plenary Assembly rather than in this Committee, even though its importance to disarmament is evident. While the technical proficiency of arms control negotiators and experts is welcome and necessary, my delegation would like to emphasize the larger aspects of education and formation, and thus reiterate its firm commitment.

**The Chairman** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

**Mr. Ziping Gu** (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): Please allow me to join other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee.

I am pleased to report on the activities of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is one of the cornerstones of the international regime dedicated to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. By putting an end to all nuclear explosions, the Treaty constitutes an effective measure in the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects and therefore contributes to the enhancement of international peace and security as well as to the protection of the environment.

Since its adoption the CTBT has increasingly become universal in its status. As of today, the Treaty

has been signed by a total of 173 States and has been ratified by 119 States, including 33 of the 44 States, listed in annex 2 to the Treaty, whose ratification is required for it to enter into force.

I am pleased to note that since October 2003, four States have signed — Eritrea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania — and 14 States have ratified — Bahrain, Belize, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania — including one of the annex 2 States, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To date, 98 States have notified the Preparatory Commission of their designation of National Authorities or national focal points.

The 2004 Joint Ministerial Statement of support for the CTBT, initiated by Australia, Finland, Japan and the Netherlands and adopted on 23 September 2004, is another example demonstrating the support of States for bringing about the entry into force of the CTBT.

The main activities of the Preparatory Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat are the establishment of the verification regime stipulated by the CTBT and the promotion of understanding and the entry into force of the Treaty.

The establishment of the International Monitoring System (IMS), a worldwide network comprising 321 seismic, radionuclide, hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories, is steadily progressing. The IMS stations are transmitting raw data to the International Data Centre (IDC) in Vienna through a satellite-based global communications infrastructure, which also connects the IDC with national data centres of States.

On-site inspection, as provided for in the Treaty, is a final verification measure, and the development of the draft operational manual for on-site inspection is a key task of the Preparatory Commission in that area.

The primary purpose of the CTBT is to ensure, globally, an end to nuclear test explosions, thus enhancing national and international security. However, the CTBT verification technologies have the potential to offer important additional benefits derived from IMS data and the activities of the IDC. Seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound data can be used in studies of the Earth's structure and for research on earthquakes, volcanic eruption forecasting, tsunami warning, underwater explosion location and sea temperature and climate change monitoring. For example, in the oceans, an increasing number of icebergs breaking off the Antarctic ice shelves have been observed, a phenomenon probably linked to global warming.

Infrasound data can assist in minimizing the effect of volcanic eruptions on civil aviation and can be used for atmospheric and meteorological studies. The IMS radionuclide network offers opportunities for detecting radionuclide dispersion, monitoring radiation levels, studying natural radioactivity, and engaging in biological research and environmental change investigations.

The Preparatory Commission continues to organize training programmes and workshops to support the enhancement of the national technical capabilities of member States in the implementation of the Treaty. That includes training courses for IMS station operators, NDC managers and technical staff, in areas including data analysis, storage and management, the global communications infrastructure and on-site inspection technologies.

In the field of international cooperation, the Provisional Technical Secretariat continues its role as an information clearing house and provides support for the advancement of the Commission's work, including information visit programmes to support IMS and IDC activities. Voluntary contributions from member States have been received to support those activities.

In 2004, an international cooperation workshop for States from Northern Africa took place in Tunisia. From 29 November to 1 December an international cooperation workshop for States from Southern Africa will be held in South Africa.

Following the adoption by the General Assembly on 15 June 2000 of the Agreement to regulate the relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, our relations and interactions with the United Nations and its programmes, funds and specialized agencies have been developing further and can better contribute to the goals of the United Nations.

**In closing, I would like to stress that eight years of developments since its opening for signature have confirmed the growing support and recognition by the international community of the CTBT as an important instrument in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.**

***The meeting rose at 1 p.m.***